

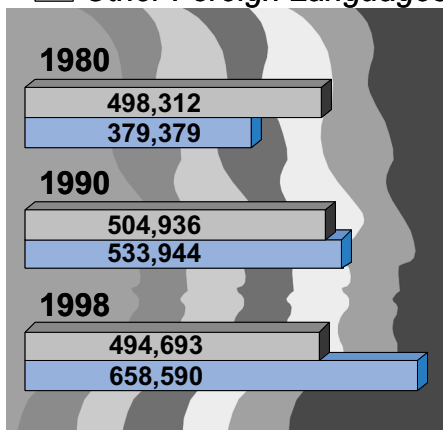
► **LANGUAGES STRONG:**
The number of students annually enrolled in Graduate School language classes has reached nearly 11,000.



SNAPSHOT

Popular parlance: Spanish has become the most studied modern language in U.S. post-secondary institutions.

■ Spanish
■ Other Foreign Languages



Source: Modern Language Association of America survey

COVER STORY

EEOC: Presentations Present No Problem

For Joe Schubert, the biggest hurdle is the fear factor. On day one, as he first looks out at administrative judges, lawyers, investigators and supervisors from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Schubert often spies stage fright in the eyes of reluctant public speakers who need to sell EEO laws to the private sector.

"This is the first time anyone has ever talked to them about selling compliance," says Schubert, the Graduate School instructor for the two-day course *Presentation Techniques*. "When talking to a public audience of employees, they need to provide reasons why people need to comply with the law. ... EEOC wants voluntary compliance."

Last year, the EEOC requested a customized course that would teach subject-matter experts and attorneys how to brief private-sector employees in nontechnical, easy-to-understand language with visual aids.

In the nationwide training program, Schubert has delivered 25 workshops with five more scheduled. The 10 to 12 parti-

cipants in each session have learned how to:

- Build a clear, concise presentation in five steps;
- Manage presentation logistics;
- Build speaking confidence; and
- Use story walls.

During the sessions, each would-be briefer eventually makes a videotaped classroom presentation,

through which the instructor gives feedback.

The feedback EEOC has received, in turn, has been positive. "We wanted to enhance the overall quality of our trainers in

terms of basic presentation techniques," says Valerie Greer, a curriculum and product development specialist in EEOC's Training and Technical Assistance Division. "People really enjoyed the training."

Chuck Walker, the Graduate School program specialist coordinating the workshops, reports that Schubert's classroom success had led to more modifications. "The course is so well received that we changed our open enrollment courses to reflect changes [made for] EEOC."

For more information about the EEOC briefing course, contact Chuck Walker at (202) 314-3403.



UPDATES



CFOs in the Making: “Each of us is committed to our own personal vision of a better government and better world,” said Tyndall Traversa, a Chief Financial Officers Program fellow, at the May ceremony in Washington, D.C., that honored the class of 2000. Eight fellows heard from top financial officers and the Graduate School’s executive director. The Graduate School conducts financial management training in the program initiated by the CFO Council two years ago. Traversa, a team leader for financial and program management at the National Weather Service, served her fellowship at the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Just In

- ▶ A new content sampler for the classroom course *Clear Writing Through Critical Thinking* has debuted on the Graduate School Web site. The sampler provides prospective enrollees with 33 screens of course exercises and guidance on clear writing and critical thinking. Go to www.grad.usda.gov/programs_services/reg/cobs_subj.cfm.
- ▶ Six more sessions of the *Residential Workshop for Administrative Support Staff* are up on the online catalog at www.grad.usda.gov.
- ▶ An updated *Effective Communication with Customers* offered nationwide has six more sessions scheduled this year. The National Capital Training Center will offer *Service Excellence* as an open-enrollment and on-site course. And *Telephone Service Skills* and *Dealing with Angry Customers* are on-site options across the country.

A Key Bridge

The Graduate School’s Division of Continuing Education has joined forces with Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business in Washington, D.C. The two organizations kicked off the 18-month Leadership Development Program for USDA’s Risk Management Agency in May with 15 participants from GS levels 12 and 13. Architects of the RMA program hope to develop employee leadership and managerial skills.

“The purpose of the program is to re-envision how the RMA can co-op skills from corporate America,” says Landon Summers, the former Continuing Education program manager who served as an academic liaison with the agency. “The Graduate School acts as an intermediary bridge between Georgetown University and the RMA.”

Donald Shandler, director of Continuing Education, says that the agency identified his division as the best representative of the diverse resources of the Graduate School and other educational providers. “The RMA wanted a full-service, one-stop shopping relationship with a key Graduate School contact,” says Shandler.

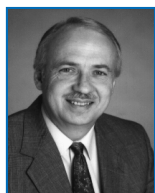
RMA’s mission is critical. In administering the crop insurance program for USDA, RMA helps farmers withstand major crop loss.

For further information, call (202) 314-3650.

Work Rewarded: At the May ceremony in Washington, D.C., arranged by Evening & Weekend Programs, graduates took turns lining up. Felton Jones, a Graduate School office manager (back row, fourth from the left), organized the event for 94 students who completed certificates of accomplishment in 15 subject areas in the last two years.



From the Executive Director




This June, on the second anniversary of the presidential memorandum "Plain Language in Government Writing," we can celebrate progress so far and look ahead to more.

The National Partnership for Reinventing Government held a plain language summit via satellite on June 1 to reinforce their commitment to making language reader-centered. They are building on some solid achievements. In the federal sector, regulations, notices, directives and other policy documents, forms, letters, instructions and Internet pages reflect new precepts because of the memorandum. Communication has been streamlined. We now often find everyday words, personal pronouns, active voice and shorter sentences in government language.

This success comes at a critical juncture. Writing has never been more important. Words have taken on new speed and force with the staggering proliferation of electronic communications. In the United States:

- ▶ Approximately 35 percent of the population will be online by the end of 2000.
- ▶ More than 72 million hosts – computers that act as information sources – are now online.
- ▶ About 20 percent of all households will have high-speed data capacity by 2005.

At the Graduate School, our communications curriculum has received renewed emphasis. This issue highlights some gains. To learn more about programs and courses, visit our Web site www.grad.usda.gov.


Philip H. Hudson

Climbing the Government Ladder

Need a leg up in the confusing world of federal job applications? Three new Evening & Weekend courses this fall will help: *Crafting a Competitive Resumix Resume*, *Ditch Your SF-171* and *Driving Your KSAs with CCAR*. Training will benefit applicants trying to enter the federal workforce and federal employees who want to move up a grade level.

"The courses are concise and compressed. You only have to devote three Saturdays to each," says Stefan Gunther, the program manager arranging the sessions.

To get government software to flag your resume, the course on Resumix, the new electronic resume format, will teach you tips. To sell yourself on paper and avoid constant SF-171 updates, the course on the new federal resume applications will help you rewrite your resume. And to tackle the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities statements, a course on using context, challenge, action and results (the CCAR model recommended by the Office of Personnel Management) will boost your chances.

For more information, call (202) 314-3650.

Resume Team: The two instructors for the new resume courses, Eric Friel and Alan Cross, come from the Resume Place, an organization specializing in federal and electronic resumes.

Cross has counseled applicants at all grade levels for four years. He specializes in federal resumes and knowledge, skills and abilities statements, known as KSAs. Friel, the former Webmaster at govexec.com, now serves as Webmaster at the new planetgov.com. He co-authored "The Electronic Federal Resume Writing Guidebook," with Kathryn Kraemer Troutman, the founder and president of the Resume Place.

Troutman, who also authored "The Federal Resume Guidebook," has some advice for federal job seekers. She says the biggest mistake that applicants make is that "they don't read and interpret the vacancy announcement well," and then they compound the error by not writing application materials to suit the announcement. "They also don't think hard enough about where they are going. They are still writing about what they've done, not where they want to go," she says.

Her most important advice for aspiring candidates?

"Be realistic about your expectations. Make sure you meet the basic qualifications of the job and that your qualifications, knowledge, skills and abilities are clear in your application."

Kudos Corner

Susan Borinsky, an environmental planner at the Federal Transit Administration, completed the Graduate School's Executive Potential Program in May. In a developmental assignment, she worked on Capitol Hill as part of the 12-month program for federal employees from GS levels 13 to 15. "Whatever the future holds, my professional and personal life will be significantly enhanced because of the EPP experience," she says. "Every EPP participant I got to know well shares this attitude."

WHAT'S NEW

Worldwide Distribution: Chen D. Yang, a Graduate School instructor for Chinese language, literature and public policy, published an article on the unique characteristics of teaching Chinese outside China in the February 24 edition of The People's Daily. The publication is distributed internationally.

Hot Off the Press: The third book published by Harrison Snow, an adjunct instructor and consultant for the Graduate School — "Tools for Teams: The Manager's Guide to Building Teams" — can be ordered from Amazon.com. "The book is a condensed course of the knowledge, skills and tools needed in today's team-based organizations," says Snow.

Language Council Recreated: Evening & Weekend Programs has set up an eight-member, blue-ribbon Foreign Language Advisory Council. Language leaders from university, government and public policy organizations in Washington, D.C. will provide guidance on the latest in language training. The new members will meet for the first time this fall after a six-year hiatus in council meetings.

"There is a growth in foreign language training that we want to keep up with," says Maria Wilmeth, the Graduate School's resident language expert. "We have to be proactive and stay abreast — listening, asking and reading."

Wilmeth manages a Washington, D.C.-based program in which 27 languages are taught in an average of nearly 200 classes a term. Last year, Albanian, Indonesian, Hindi, Cantonese and Thai were taught for the first time. This September, Farsi will be scheduled.

